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**“IM”**  
FOR SAFETY

**“IM”**  
FOR CLEAN AIR

**“IM”**  
MASSACHUSETTS  
MOTOR VEHICLE  
INSPECTION MAINTENANCE  
PROGRAM.



834/98

# Questions and Answers

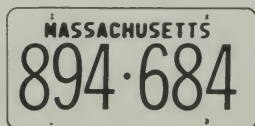
**Q.** What is the new I/M Program?

**A.** I/M stands for the new Inspection Maintenance Program for Massachusetts motor vehicles. It will incorporate the traditional safety inspection of systems such as brakes and lights with a computerized analysis of your vehicle's tailpipe emissions level. The new program will test your vehicle only once a year, will help to end the twice a year inspection jam ups, will assure that your car is tuned for better mileage and longer wear, and will help all of us — especially the young, elderly and persons with respiratory disease — breathe easier.

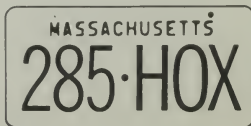
**Q.** When will I have to have my car inspected?

**A.** Your car must be inspected once a year during the month corresponding to the last number on your license plate. For instance, if your license plate ends in a 4, April is your inspection month. If it ends in 5, May is your month. And so on. If your license plate ends in a letter, go by the last number on the plate. If you have a plate with all letters, your car must be inspected in November. State, county and municipal vehicles will be inspected in December. If your license plate ends in 1, 2, or 3, your car will be inspected in the first three months of 1984.

Your current safety sticker is valid until your new inspection month.



April



May

# Questions Concerning the New

**Q.** What types of vehicles must be inspected?

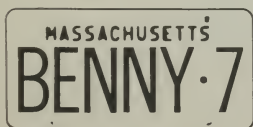
**A.** All motor vehicles registered in Massachusetts must have safety inspections. However, some are exempted from the emissions portion of the inspection if they are: more than fifteen years old; have a maximum speed of 25 m.p.h. or less; are motorcycles; have a diesel engine; have a registered weight of 10,000 pounds or more; or are new vehicles being registered for the first time.

**Q.** How much will it cost?

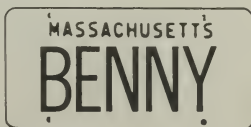
**A.** The combined emissions and safety inspection will cost \$10. The safety only inspection for exempt vehicles will cost \$4.

**Q.** How will the new inspection program work?

**A.** First, the certified emissions inspector at a garage doing I/M inspections will enter your license plate number and the make and year of the car into the computerized emissions analyzer. Safety items will be checked and the results entered into the computer. The I/M inspector will then insert a probe into your vehicle's tailpipe and check the levels of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons being emitted. The results will be automatically compared to standards set by the state for the age of your car. The computer, not the inspector,



July



November

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will decide whether your car passes or fails the exam. The emissions test will add about 2-3 minutes to the regular safety test.

**Q. Why check for carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon levels?**

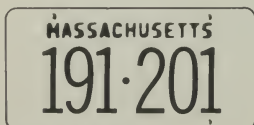
**A.** The air in Massachusetts, both in cities and in rural areas, contains high levels of carbon monoxide and ozone. Carbon monoxide reduces oxygen supply to the body, and is a particular hazard to heart patients. Ozone causes smog and aggravates asthma, emphysema and other lung diseases. Tests have shown that auto emissions are the major source of these pollutants. By requiring that cars have tuned engines and proper emissions controls, we can reduce emissions of the hydrocarbons which cause ozone by 20%, and carbon monoxide by 15%.

**Q. My car's ten years old. How can it possibly pass the same test as a 1983 vehicle?**

**A.** The older your car, the greater the amounts of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons allowed. The state standards will be prominently displayed at the I/M station.

**Q. What if my car won't pass the exam?**

**A.** In the first place, other states have found that about 85% of the vehi-



# ce Program

cles tested pass the initial test. In fact, in New York nearly 94% of the vehicles passed, because many owners tuned up their cars before taking them for inspection.

Experience in other states with I/M programs has shown that the majority of cars that fail the first test require only minimal repairs such as carburetor adjustments, air filter replacement, dwell/timing adjustment or spark plug replacement to pass a retest.

You will have 15 days to make the necessary repairs and are entitled to one free retest at the original inspection station.

**Q. What if repairs are expensive or can't be made in fifteen days because parts aren't available?**

**A.** If a car fails an emissions test, it must have all necessary repairs on the spark plugs, air filter, carburetor or fuel injection system and ignition system. In some cases this work may be covered by your car's warranty.

Sometimes equipment, especially emissions related parts, can't be obtained in 15 days. An owner who provides written evidence from an authorized dealer for his make of vehicle that the parts won't be available in time may be issued a Temporary Maintenance Form from the Registry of Motor Vehicles. These forms are effective for a one year period and are available only during the first year of the program.



**Q.** What if I fail the retest?

**A.** If the car fails the retest, the motorist may apply to the Registry of Motor Vehicles for a Certificate of Waiver, which will be issued only if:

1. They have had tune up related repairs completed.
2. The vehicle's emissions control is present and operating.
3. The cost of additional repairs will be \$100 or 10% of the vehicle's fair market value, whichever is less.

**Q.** What kinds of consumer protections are there to make certain I get a fair test?

**A.** The new system has strong consumer protections. All stations participating in the system must be inspected before being licensed, no matter how long they have done traditional inspections. Also, all mechanics performing I/M inspections must be certified by the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering and undergo training by the analyzer manufacturers. The required use of analyzers which meet D.E.Q.E. specifications ensures a consistent inspection program statewide.

A computer tape recording the safety and emissions test data will be collected monthly and analyzed by the Registry and D.E.Q.E. to identify stations whose pass/fail ratios appear to be abnormally high or low. The computer analyzers themselves are automatically calibrated and tamperproof. When your inspection is completed, you will be

given a computer printout of the test results as a permanent record of your inspection.

Finally, there is consumer protection under the existing "Lemon Law" (Chapter 90,S 7N), which states that within 7 days of purchase, if a vehicle fails the safety or emissions (if required) test, and if required repairs exceed 10% of the vehicle's purchase price, the new owner has the right to return that vehicle for a full refund, unless the buyer and the seller have agreed in writing that the seller may perform the necessary safety or emissions repairs at his own expense.

**Q. What are the benefits to me of the I/M Program?**

**A.** A well-tuned car gets better mileage, and should also last longer, an important consideration given the high cost of new cars. In addition, everyone will benefit from the cleaner air, and the new consumer protections will help guarantee that the program is carried out correctly.

**Q. Where can I obtain more information?**

**A.** The Department of Environmental Quality Engineering and the Registry of Motor Vehicles operate a toll free I/M hotline: 1-800-462-0462, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Registry of Motor Vehicles  
Alan Mackey, Registrar  
100 Nashua Street  
Boston, MA 02114

Department of Environmental Quality Engineering  
Anthony D. Cortese, Sc.D., Commissioner  
1 Winter Street  
Boston, MA 02108